

Year 1 – Session #2
English Language Arts

Focus Questions:

- What are the inquiry processes of the discipline?
- How are reading, writing, listening, speaking, enacting, thinking, and inquiring connected?
- How do teachers plan for and implement instruction that fosters effective discussions of texts?
- What are the features of quality discussions of and responses to texts?

Student and Teacher Standards Connection:

<u>Student Standards</u>	<u>Teaching Standards</u>	<u>Instructional Strategies</u>
#3 – Reading: Literary Response and Analysis	#1 – Concepts, Tools of Inquiry & Structures of English Language Arts	Pre-, During, Post-Reading Strategies
#7 – Listening & Speaking	#2 – Knowledge of Language Development & Learning Theory	Profiling learners

Performance Assessment Connection:

- Practice strategies for engaging students with literature and responding to it through discussion.
- Identify some of the features of quality discussions and various ways to foster it in secondary classrooms.
- Practice reflective writing about teaching and learning.
- Practice profiling learners.

Seminar to Classroom Expectations:

- Use one of the strategies modeled in the seminar, and write a written reflection of its effectiveness.
- Read Chapter 2, “Best Practices in Reading,” from *Best Practices*.
- Build learner profiles for two learners of differing performance levels.
- Videotape one class discussion and bring to next session.

Seminar Format:

I. Reconnecting Activity

- A. Each participant prepares an “Admit Slip” (Give large note cards. Write on the front a description of the strategy you tried since last session and either the evidence you have for how well it worked for you or a variation you are considering for the future.)
- B. Share cards with group.
- C. Keep cards until end of session. (See EXIT SLIP.)

II. Self-Assessment of Beliefs about Learning

- A. Use a self-assessment instrument (see page 7 of *Mind Matters: Teaching for Thinking* for an example) which causes teachers to articulate their beliefs about

learning for all learners. Depending upon the instrument used, teachers might be asked to pair & share or discuss in small groups their self-assessments.

- B. Discuss what our self-assessments indicate about the assumptions we make about learners and learning. Discuss the implications for how we develop our classroom environments and instructional strategies.

III. Read and discuss chapter 4 from *Mind Matters* – “The Thinking Student”

- A. Discuss how the preceding self-assessment serves as an anticipation guide for this chapter (models an effective reading strategy).
- B. Possibly provide a note-taking strategy for participants to use as they read the chapter.
- C. Maybe use a jig saw approach if time is restricted.
- D. Focusing question: How can we meet the needs of all kinds of learners and thinkers in our ELA classrooms?

IV. Profile Learners

- A. Select two learners of differing abilities from one of your classes. Begin to profile these students by listing five to ten features for each of them that describe their learning in your classroom.
- B. Examine the handout “Profiling a Learner – A Descriptive Review” adapted from Cochran-Smith and Lytle’s *Inside/Outside: Teacher Research and Knowledge* (1993).
- C. Continue to add to the learner profiles throughout the semester.

V. Inquiry in English Language Arts

- A. If time permits, ask participants to create graphic organizers to represent their understandings of these processes. Then look at the graphics before discussing the similarities and differences.
- B. Share inquiry cycle. Discuss similarities and differences among writing process, reading process, and inquiry process.
- C. Discuss similarities among these ELA processes and the processes of collecting classroom learning data and conducting teacher research. Connect to the learner profiles discussed earlier.

VI. Reading Process – Model a Strategy

- A. Select a text and reading strategy that can be modeled during the time frame. (We used Ray Bradbury’s “All Summer in a Day” for our sessions. We also used an activity adapted from Jeffrey Wilhelm’s article “Learning by Being: Drama as Total Immersion” in *Voices in the Middle*, December 2, 1998.)
- B. Model pre-reading, during reading, and after-reading strategies.
- C. Discuss effectiveness of various strategies for different learners (English as new language learners, struggling readers, advanced readers)
- D. Discuss the role that discussion plays in students’ responses to text. Identify various ways to facilitate discussions and various kinds of discussions that can be used for different instructional purposes.
- E. Using the teaching and learning standards as guides, identify the characteristics of student discussions that ELA teachers are striving for in their classrooms.

VII. Prepare “Exit Slips”

- A. On back of note cards used at the beginning of the session, record one idea that you have learned which you plan to take back to your classroom

- B. Also, record one insight you have about your teaching, especially regarding reading and discussing texts.
- C. Give note cards to facilitator.

Materials Needed for the Seminar:

- Binders with copies of the student and teacher standards for English Language Arts.
- Copies of self-assessment instrument to use with teachers as they discuss their beliefs about learning.
- Copies of Chapter 4 from *Mind Matters: Teaching for Thinking*.
- Copies of guidelines for videotaping (from handbook or other source) to use with assignment.
- Copies of handouts for learner profile assignment.
- Copies of Chapter 2 from *Best Practices: New Standards for Teaching and Learning in America's Schools* (1998).
- Additional: Videotapes of sample discussions and/or explanations of strategies.
- Reflective Writing Journal (notebook)
- Name Tags or Name Plates
- Note cards for “Admit” and “Exit Slips” strategies

General Explanation:

Though connections among reading, writing, and thinking are evident in the activities throughout the seminars, the primary topics for this seminar are **reading** and **discussion**. The participants examine “best practices” in reading from the teaching standards (especially #1 and #2) and from current research. (Suggestions: The chapter on reading in *Best Practice: New Standards for Teaching and Learning in America's Schools*; various appendices in *Kids Insight* by Deborah Dillon; The Study Guide for *Strategies that Work* by S. Harvey and A. Goudvis that is available online at www.stenhouse.com ; IRA and NCTE standards and publications – see *Reading Instruction* for sample.)

Participants practice a strategy for engaging students in reading and discussing literature such as the Learning By Being activity developed by Marianne Darr-Norman from Jeffrey Wilhelm's article “Learning by Being: Drama as Total Immersion” in *Voices in the Middle*, December 2, 1998.

During this seminar, the participants reflect on their own beliefs about student learning and begin to build learner profiles for selected students in their classes. The teachers continue to construct these learner profiles in subsequent sessions by adding samples of student work, observational notes, test data, and any other information that helps to create a picture of student learning in English Language Arts for the selected student(s).

Deborah Dillon's *Kid Insight: Reconsidering How to Meet the Literacy Needs of All Students* (2000) contains a chapter (#5) “Using Knowledge About Learners and Relationships, and Recognizing the Conditions that Foster Learning” that demonstrates how teachers can collect information about their students and the conditions for learning within their classrooms to help guide their own instructional practices. This chapter also provides guidance for using videotapes to learn about learners.